

THE STORY OF PETER And THE STORY OF RUTH

Aunt Hattie's Bible Stories

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by

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CHAPTER EIGHT

PETER WILL SHEPHERD SHEEP

AFTER A FEW DAYS seven of the disciples, including Peter, returned to their homes in Galilee.

More than three years had passed by since the day when the Lord Jesus called Peter from his fishing boats to follow Him.

He was at home again. The bright dreams of a restored kingdom of Israel had faded away. Grim disappointment rested not only upon Peter, but upon the whole group.

Peter's old, restless spirit could not be comforted. His Lord had forgiven him, but He was not with him as He had been.

He should have remembered Jesus' promise that He would come to them, and he should have waited for Him. Instead, he turned to his old trade and called to his friends one day, "I am going fishing." Heartily they responded, "We'll go along."

And the seven discouraged men went from the heights of companionship with the Lord to the commonplace things of this life, not believing the words so graciously given to them.

All night they fished and caught nothing!

When daylight came, Jesus, the glorified Son of God, stood on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias, yet none of His disciples recognized Him.

Presently, perhaps cupping His hands around His mouth, He cried, "**Children, have you any meat?**" Or, "Children, have you caught anything?"

Back across the water, now alight with the glow of the morning sun, came the answer, “No.”

Then came the words, “Cast your net on the right side of the boat and you will find.”

I wonder if Peter said to himself, “What is the use? There are no fish here.” However the net was cast as the One on the shore commanded, and immediately it was filled.

John took one look at the net full of fish, then across to the One on the shore and said to Peter, “It is the Lord.”

Peter was beside himself with joy. He couldn’t wait for the slow moving boat with the net full of fish to take him, but wrapping his fisher’s coat about him, he jumped out of the boat and waded to the shore, for they were not far from the land.

The boat was towed in with the catch of fish, one hundred and fifty-three in all.

The night had been long and the men were hungry and chilled. Jesus knowing this had breakfast ready for them. He had built a fire upon which He was roasting fish. Presently He said, “Come to breakfast.”

I have often thought about that meal of fish and bread, enough for seven hungry men, whom Jesus loved with an everlasting love. I think that I can see them gathered around the fire, some sitting and some reclining upon the grass while their blessed Lord served them. Did they remember His words, “He that is greatest among you shall be your servant”?

What better time for real fellowship than after a satisfying meal, and Jesus used this very time to say some things, especially to Peter!

The Lord had forgiven Peter and his conscience was at rest, but something deeper was needed and Jesus went to the root of the matter. It is not enough to cut off the top of a weed, for it will surely grow again. Jesus wanted Peter to look deep into his own heart and see it as it was.

He said, “**Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me more than these?**”

I believe that Peter looked into the face of Jesus somewhat surprised as he answered, “**Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.**”

Jesus said, “**Feed My Lambs.**”

Then He asked Peter again, “**Simon, do you love Me?**” Peter answered, “**Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.**”

And Jesus said, “**Feed My sheep.**”

And again, the third time He said, “**Simon, do you love Me?**”

I think by this time that Peter's head was bowed low and his heart was hurt and very sad as he answered, "**Lord, You know all things, You know that I love You.**"

Jesus answered as before, "**Feed My sheep.**"

Three times in the presence of enemies Peter had denied that he knew Jesus. Now three times in the presence of his friends He requires him to own his love for Him.

When Peter answered the last time, "**Lord, You know all things;**" it was as though he had said, "Yes, Lord, look into the very depths of my heart and see that all has been cleansed and made new. I do right now surrender all to You forevermore.

One thing more Jesus told Peter in this early morning talk on the seashore. He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, when you were young you dressed yourself and walked wherever you wished to go, but when you are old, Peter, you will stretch out your hands and another will put on your clothing for you and take you where you do not want to go."

This was to tell Peter how he would glorify God in his death. It is reported that Peter was crucified when he was old. That would mean being carried where he did not want to go, and stretching forth his hand.

Peter was willing to die for his Lord, but no one wants to suffer unless it is necessary.

Some ancient writers say that when the time came for Peter to die, he asked to be crucified with his head downward, thinking it too much of an honor to die in the same manner as his Lord.

~ end of chapter 8 ~

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